

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 ROME 08689 01 OF 02 111829Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 SY-05 MCT-01 TRSE-00 HA-05
/074 W

-----072863 111853Z /45

O R 111721Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2697
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION USNATO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 8689

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER RESIGNS TO ACCEPT FULL POLITICAL
RESPONSIBILITY FOR MORO CASE

SUMMARY: IN A SURPRISE MOVE, INTERIOR MINISTER COSSIGA
TENDERED HIS RESIGNATION TO PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI ON
MAY 10 IN ORDER "TO ASSUME FULL POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THE OPERATION OF (HIS) MINISTRY IN THE MORO CASE."
DURING THE 54 DAYS OF MORO'S CAPTIVITY, COSSIGA HAD COORDINATED
THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE CASE AS HEAD OF THE
INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR SECURITY. THERE HAS BEEN
NO INDICATION FROM ANDREOTTI'S OFFICE AS TO WHETHER
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 ROME 08689 01 OF 02 111829Z

COSSIGA'S RESIGNATION WILL BE ACCEPTED: THE PRIME MINISTER
WILL REPORTEDLY CONSULT WITH THE FIVE PARTIES THAT
SUPPORT HIS GOVERNMENT, PRESUMABLY PRIOR TO THE PARLIA-
MENTARY DEBATE ON THE MORO CASE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN
ON MAY 18. COSSIGA AND THE SECURITY FORCES HAD COME
UNDER INCREASING ATTACK FROM BOTH THE RIGHT AND LEFT
FOR ALLEGED INADEQUACIES IN THE HANDLING OF THE CASE.

SPOKESMEN FOR THE VARIOUS PARTIES (INCLUDING THE DC AND PCI) HAVE PRAISED COSSIGA'S DECISION, HOWEVER, AS CORRECT AND DIGNIFIED. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A SURPRISE MOVE (AND, WE UNDERSTAND, WITHOUT CONSULTING ANDREOTTI BEFOREHAND, INTERIOR MINISTER COSSIGA ADDRESSED A LETTER OF RESIGNATION TO ANDREOTTI ON MAY 10. ALLUDING TO THE FORTHCOMING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON THE MORO CASE (SCHEDULED FOR MAY 18), COSSIGA SAID HE WAS RESIGNING TO ENABLE PARLIAMENT TO EXAMINE WHAT HAD BEEN DONE AND EXPRESS ITS JUDGMENT WITH "THE NECESSARY SERENITY". IN SO DOING, HE SAID HE TOOK FULL "POLITICAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY" FOR HIS ACTIONS AND THOSE OF HIS MINISTRY. COSSIGA DEFENDED THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY (FORMULATED WITH THE "CONSENSUS OF PARLIAMENT") AS "THE ONLY ONE POSSIBLE TO SERVE THE COUNTRY'S LONG-TERM INTERESTS AND TO DEFEND THE STATE." WHILE THE PROBLEM OF COMBATTING TERRORISM INCLUDED TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS POLICE ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING, COSSIGA SAID THAT IT WAS FOREMOST A POLITICAL PROBLEM "REQUIRING THE SOLUTION OF THE BROAD THEMES OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CHARACTER."

2. THERE HAS BEEN NO COMMENT FROM PRIME MINISTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 ROME 08689 01 OF 02 111829Z

ANDREOTTI'S OFFICE AS TO WHETHER COSSIGA'S RESIGNATION WILL BE ACCEPTED. ANDREOTTI WILL REPORTEDLY CONSULT THE LEADERS OF THE FIVE PARTIES THAT SUPPORT THIS GOVERNMENT; THE COMMUNISTS HAVE SUPPORTED A REPUBLICAN AND SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY CALL FOR A FIVE-PARTY COLLEGIAL MEETING WITH ANDREOTTI TO DISCUSS THE COSSIGA RESIGNATION AND OTHER MORO-RELATED ISSUES.

3. PARTY SPOKESMEN HAVE APPLAUDED COSSIGA'S MOVE, HOWEVER, AS CORRECT AND COURAGEOUS. DC DEPUTY SECRETARY GALLONI CALLED IT "A GESTURE OF GREAT HONESTY". PCI SECRETARIAT MEMBER PAJETTA SAID COSSIGA'S LETTER SHOWED "SENSITIVITY AND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS," WHILE STRESSING THAT THE DECISION TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THE RESIGNATION SHOULD NOT BE HASTY AND BE COORDINATED BETWEEN ANDREOTTI AND THE FIVE PARTIES. THE SOCIALISTS HAVE RESERVED JUDGMENT ON THE LETTER PENDING "FULL EXAMINATION."

4. IN RECENT WEEKS, COSSIGA AND THE SECURITY FORCES HAD COME UNDER MOUNTING CRITICISM FOR THEIR HANDLING OF THE MORO CASE. NEVER ENCHANGED WITH COSSIGA, DC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 ROME 08689 02 OF 02 111834Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 SY-05 MCT-01 TRSE-00 HA-05
/074 W

-----072922 111852Z /45

O R 111721Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2698
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION USNATO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 8689

CONSERVATIVES STEPPED UP THEIR ATTACK. IN HIS EULOGY TO MORO AT THE SENATE ON MAY 10, FANFANI AGAIN CRITICIZED THE SECURITY FORCES (AND THE GOVERNMENT) FOR "DEMONSTRATED INADEQUACIES IN THE INVESTIGATION." PCI LEADERS INCLUDING BERLINGUER HAVE ALSO CHARGED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS WERE INSUFFICIENT, HINTING DARKLY AT COLLUSION WITH RIGHTIST FORCES PROTECTING THE TERRORISTS BY PREVENTING A FULL-SCALE INVESTIGATION. FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, SOCIALISTS WERE CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S UNWILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE CRAXI'S PROPOSAL TO SEEK MORO'S RELEASE THROUGH A MORE FLEXIBLE "HUMANITARIAN" POLICY.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 ROME 08689 02 OF 02 111834Z

5. EDITORIAL COMMENTARY HAS APRALLELED THE POLITICAL REACTIONS IN PRAISING COSSIGA'S DECISION. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, CORRIERE DELLA SERA COMMENTS ON MAY 11 THAT GIVEN THE "INEXISTENT SECRET SERVICES," POORLY TRAINED POLICE, AND MULTIPLICITY OF UNCOOPERATIVE INVESTIGATORY BODIES, NO GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE PRODUCED LESS DISCONCERTING RESULTS. HOWEVER, COSSIGA IS FAULTED FOR HAVING ADOPTED A POLICY OF OUTWARD CALM AND SILENCE, WHICH IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN "INSPIRED" BY ANTI-TERRORIST SPECIALIST AND DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE PIECZENIK. SUCH A POLICY MAY WORK IN ANGLO-SAXON COUNTRIES, THE CORRIERE ASSERTS, BUT IT DID NOT WORK IN ITALY WHERE THE INTERIOR MINISTRY'S SILENCE (IN THE FACE OF FEVERISH AGITATION OF THE FAMILY, FRIENDS, MAGISTRATES, PARTIES AND MEDIA) WAS INTERPRETED AS "AN ADMISSION OF IMPOTENCE WHICH REINFORCED THE TERRORISTS' ARROGANCE."

6. COMMENT: HAVING SERVED IN THREE CABINETS FOR THE LAST 27 MONTHS IN THE POLITICALLY EXPOSED INTERIOR POST, COSSIGA'S POSITION HAS BEEN VULNERABLE FOR SOME TIME. THERE HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION, PARTICULARLY FROM DC QUARTERS, TO COSSIGA'S INCLUSION IN THE MARCH GOVERNMENT. LATELY, COSSIGA HAS BEEN CRITICIZED BY THE PCI AS WELL. COSSIGA'S ROLE IN THE MORO CASE, HOWEVER, WAS THAT OF COORDINATING THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIVITIES; HE CAREFULLY TOOK NO INITIATIVE WITHOUT THE FULL CONCURRENCE OF ANDREOTTI AND THE OTHER CABINET MEMBERS OF THE EMERGENCY "TASK FORCE." ALTHOUGH IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER COSSIGA'S UNEXPECTED RESIGNATION WILL BE ACCEPTED, HIS MOVE APPEARS DESIGNED TO PREEMPT ANTICIPATED MOVES IN NEXT WEEK'S PARLIAMENTARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 ROME 08689 02 OF 02 111834Z

DEBATE TO FORCE HIS RESIGNATION. IF THE PRIME MINISTER (IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PARTIES) DECLINES TO ACCEPT HIS RESIGNATION, THE EXPECTED ATTACK WILL HAVE LOST ITS BITE. IF IT IS ACCEPTED (AND THE POLITICAL REACTION SEEMS TO POINT IN THIS DIRECTION), COSSIGA WILL BE ABLE TO LEAVE THE CABINET IN DIGNITY. WHILE IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT COSSIGA'S RESIGNATION OR THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE MORO CASE COULD PROVOKE A GOVERNMENT CRISIS, THE NAMING OF A REPLACEMENT MIGHT SET IN MOTION INTER AND INTRA-PARTY MANEUVERING THAT COULD THREATEN THE EXISTING POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT. GARDNER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, ALLEGATIONS, DEATHS, PARTY LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ROME08689
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780200-1074
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780569/aaaacgkk.tel
Line Count: 222
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 50138ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2719645
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTERIOR MINISTER RESIGNS TO ACCEPT FULL POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MORO CASE SUMMARY: IN A SURPRISE MOVE, INTERIOR MINISTER COS
TAGS: PINT, IT, (MORO, ALDO), (COSSIGA, FRANCESCO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/50138ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014